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Mar 10 2010

Advancing American Innovation and Competitiveness

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee,

STATEMENT OF SEN. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,

RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING on 'ADVANCING
AMERICAN INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS'

MARCH 10, 2010



Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today. I want to welcome our witnesses, each of whom has an important role to play in encouraging research and development efforts and in realizing the goals of the America COMPETES Act.

With the U.S. economy still fragile, I think the issue of America's long-term competitiveness is more critical than ever. We have important work to do in making sure that we have sustained economic growth and a strong supply of private sector jobs to employ the next generation of American workers.

Science and technology are at the core of America's ability to compete in an increasingly globalized economy and to solving many of the challenges we face as a nation in energy independence, biotechnology, and healthcare.

According to the National Science Board's [Science and Engineering Indicators 2010](#) report, U.S. leadership in research and development (R&D) and technological innovation is not growing, it is shrinking. We are still world leaders in R&D, but if this trend continues, a future where we are no longer world leaders in technological development is imminent.

In order to compete, the U.S. needs to not only train the best scientists and engineers in the world,

but we must ensure that every student is prepared with a strong proficiency in math and science so that they can be competitive for the high-paying, high-tech jobs of the 21st century.

Members of Congress have been talking for years about how to encourage young students to pursue strong coursework in math and science and eventually to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

However, despite this discussion and our efforts to date, the rates of American students going into STEM fields remain disturbingly low.

In my home state of Texas, only 41 percent of the high school graduates are ready for college-level math (algebra), and **only 24 percent are ready for college-level science** (biology). Furthermore, only 2 percent of all U.S. 9th-grade boys and 1 percent of girls will attain even an undergraduate science or engineering degree.

In contrast to these troubling numbers Mr. Chairman, 42% of all college undergraduates in China earn science or engineering degrees.

Furthermore, in 2000, nearly 80 percent of the 114,000 science and engineering (S&E) doctorates awarded worldwide were from institutions *outside* the United States. And this situation has only gotten worse in the last 10 years.

I think we can make America even more competitive and innovative than it is today. We can and we must.

To grow high paying, highly skilled American jobs, we need to increase investment in research by lowering the corporate tax rate, including a permanent extension of the R&D tax credit. We need to encourage student interest in careers in math, science, and technology. And, we need to foster an atmosphere of private-public partnerships between our educational institutions and those companies that need STEM graduates.

Key aspects of the America COMPETES Act are focused on improving the academic opportunities available to young Americans including significant efforts to attract and train teachers qualified to teach courses in science and math and expanding the availability of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. These are efforts we should continue and build upon as we move forward this Congress with efforts to reauthorize the America COMPETES Act.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

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